



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

COUTTS, ALBERTA ARRESTS AND SEIZURES

2022-02-22

KEY POINTS

- On 2022-02-14, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) launched a complex investigation into members of a small, organized group that were part of the convoy protest at the Coutts Port of Entry (POE) in Alberta.
- The RCMP arrested 13 people, laid 31 charges, including Conspiracy to Commit Murder, Possession of a Weapon for Dangerous Purpose, Mischief Over \$5,000, and Uttering Threats.
- Several firearms, multiple sets of body armour, a machete, a large quantity of ammunition and high capacity magazines were seized at the time of the arrests.

Background

The Government of Canada announced in November 2021 that as of January 15, 2022, certain categories of travellers, including truck drivers, would no longer be exempt from vaccine passport restrictions applying to international travel. A number of truckers strongly opposed this decision, and the nationwide “Freedom Convoy 2022” against the new vaccine passport restrictions ensued. This event was created through social media and was advertised as a fundraiser. It began on January 22, 2022 and arrived in Ottawa between January 28 and 29th, 2022. The protesters demanded that the government remove all COVID-19 health measures.

Several demonstrations and convoys inspired by the “Freedom Convoy” then followed across Canada and the world. The convoy in Coutts, Alberta set up a blockade that caused the closure of Alberta’s main international POE to the US (and the only one open 24 hours a day) for a period of 18 days. This blockade started on January 29, 2022 and ended on the morning of February 15, 2022.

Course of Events

The RCMP initiated a complex investigation when they became aware of a small, organized group involved in the protest in Coutts. This group said that they had, “a willingness to use force against the police if any attempts were made to disrupt the blockade”.

On the morning of February 14, 2022 the RCMP conducted a search warrant on three trailers allegedly associated with the small organized group. This action led to:

- The seizure of handguns, 13 long guns, multiple sets of body armour, a machete, a large quantity of ammunition, and high capacity magazines; and,
- The arrest and detainment of 11 individuals.

Two additional arrests connected to the Coutts border event were made during the same day. One individual was arrested on the highway en-route to the demonstration site. Two firearms were seized. A second individual was arrested for Criminal Code offences when they drove a semi-truck toward police officers, only to swerve away at the last moment and hit traffic cones instead.

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Charges

The RCMP has laid the following charges against the 13 individuals arrested:

- Conspiracy to Commit Murder (4 charges);
 - Possession of a Weapon for a Dangerous Purpose (14 charges);
 - Uttering Threats (one charge), and;
 - Mischief over \$5,000 (14 charges).
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